

17th District



PHOTO BY PAC TODD A. LYONS

The Seventeenth Coast Guard District is responsible for an area roughly equivalent to the size of the combined Lower 48 states. It encompasses the entire state of Alaska and its 45,000 miles of coastline.

Two thousand active duty, 52 reservists, 198 civilians, and 389 auxiliaries carry out the many Coast Guard missions in Alaska. These missions include search and rescue, fisheries law enforcement, maritime safety and environmental protection, and military readiness.

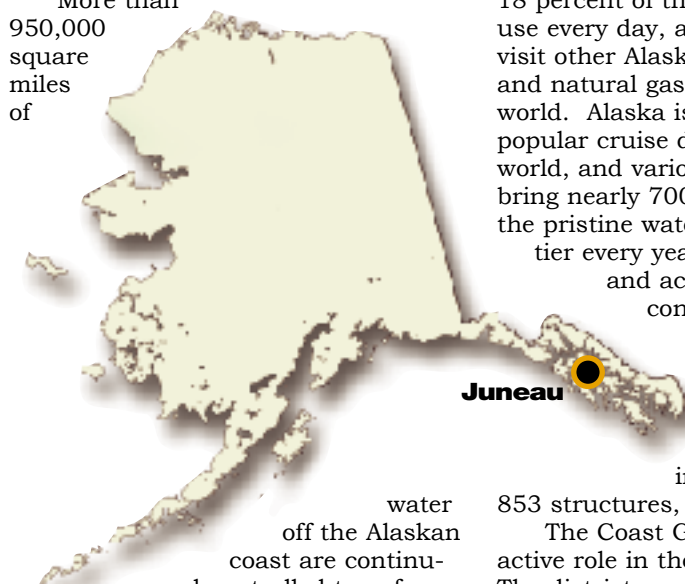
There are 48 Coast Guard units and detachments throughout Alaska, with the District headquarters located in Juneau, the states capital.

Search and rescue is the Districts most important mission. All told, Coast Guard forces are responsible for search and rescue over 3.8 million square miles of water. That exceeds the 3.6 million-square-mile-area the Coast Guard protects in the continental U.S. During FY 2000, Alaskan Coast Guard units saved 220 lives, assisted 1,234 people and saved over \$11 million in property.

Coast Guard operational resources in Alaska consist of six fixed and 11 rotary-winged aircraft, three medium endurance cutters, six buoy tenders, five patrol boats, and

two motor lifeboats. It also includes three marine safety offices, five marine safety detachments and a vessel traffic service in Valdez. High endurance cutters from the West Coast and Hawaii regularly supplement these units by conducting 60-day Alaskan Patrols.

More than 950,000 square miles of



water off the Alaskan coast are continuously patrolled to enforce the U.S. 200-mile Exclusive Economic Zone to protect American fisheries stocks. It is estimated that over 20 percent of the worlds ocean protein is contained in the Bering Sea. An even larger area of the North Pacific is patrolled to stop illegal, large-scale, high seas driftnetting.

During the past calendar year, the Coast Guard seized six foreign fishing vessels for illegal fishing two drift-netters and four Bering Sea trawlers.

Maritime safety and environmental safety are also priority missions for the Seventeenth District. The Port of Valdez is the trans-shipment point for 18 percent of the oil that Americans use every day, and additional tankers visit other Alaska ports to carry oil and natural gas to many parts of the world. Alaska is the second most popular cruise destination in the world, and various sized cruise ships bring nearly 700,000 passengers into the pristine waters of the Last Frontier every year. Preventing spills and accidents is a major concern.

There are nearly 1,300 aids to navigation to maintain throughout Alaska. They include 388 buoys, 853 structures, and 11 lighthouses.

The Coast Guard also has an active role in the defense of Alaska. The district commander is the commander of both Naval Forces Alaska and Maritime Defense Command One Seven.

The Seventeenth Districts vision is Operational Excellence through Leadership, Teamwork, and Innovation.